

Remembrance of Things Past

by peskipiksi

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Chapter 1 of 1

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Severus took a deep breath. This was ridiculous. Shaming. Professor Edmund said the Patronus Charm was difficult, that many grown wizards had trouble with it, but Severus had always been top in Defence Against the Dark Arts. The problem was that to conjure a Patronus, you had to concentrate on a really happy memory, and Severus had been so unhappy lately that he was at a loss. It didn't help that Potter and Black were sniggering, and Lily was ignoring him completely. She hadn't spoken to him in nearly two years, and – the crowning indignity – she had recently started going out with Potter.

Black had managed to produce a huge silver dog, and Lupin was staring in horrified awe at the wolf he had conjured. Severus suppressed a snigger. He knew exactly why Lupin would be mortified to produce that particular Patronus.

Severus closed his eyes and searched his memory for the first time he had met Lily.

'I know what you are,' he had told her. *'You're a witch.'*

'That's not a very nice thing to say,' she had retorted and run off to join her sister. Stung, Severus had followed them, and Petunia had accused him of spying on them.

'Wouldn't spy on you, anyway,' he told her spitefully, *'you're a Muggle.'* Lily had glared at him with hatred before running off after Petunia again.

No, that was no good. The faint sparks of silver the thought of Lily had produced died the moment he remembered how hurt she had been at his insulting her sister.

He thought of the first time she had stood up to Potter for him, on the school train. *'Come on Severus, let's find another compartment.'*

That worked – until he remembered Potter tripping him up as he passed. *'See ya, Snivellus.'*

His cloudy Patronus vanished instantly. He forced his mind back to that happy summer before he and Lily had started at Hogwarts.

'Does it make a difference, being Muggle-born?' she had asked worriedly. *'No,'* he had assured her. *'It doesn't make any difference.'*

But he had ruined that, hadn't he? The humiliating memory surfaced of being levitated by Potter. *'I don't need help from filthy little Mudbloods like her.'* Severus still flushed hot and cold at the thought of her shocked face.

The memories were getting worse. He was standing outside the Gryffindor portrait hole, pleading with Lily.

'I'm sorry'

'I'm not interested.'

'I'm sorry!'

'Save your breath.'

He wasn't even producing silver vapour now, but Potter, of course, had produced a Patronus. True to his macho posturing on the Quidditch field he had chosen a stag. As Severus watched, horrified, Lily's eyes followed the stag. Then she turned to Potter, smiled, shouted 'Expecto Patronum!', and a silver doe emerged from her wand and trotted over to the stag. Severus felt sick.

Then another memory came to him. After Lily had refused his apology, he had staggered back to the dungeons in a daze. Half-blinded by tears, he had stumbled into a room he had never been in before. A room that contained only one thing – a huge mirror. Shocked out of his misery, Severus had approached the mirror, then stared at it in wonder. In the mirror, he and Lily stood together, grown-up and beaming. He had his arm around her shoulders, and hers were twined tightly around his waist. And – his eyes widened at the sight – she was wearing a wedding ring. As he watched, entranced, two small children ran over to them – a boy and a girl, both with his dark hair and Lily's beautiful green eyes.

He had stayed there all night gazing at the mirror, but when he had gone back the next night, it had been moved, and he had never seen it again.

Severus opened his eyes. He was the only person in the class who hadn't managed the charm now. Potter and Black were laughing openly at him, but Lily was still resolutely ignoring him.

Forcing his mind back to the mirror-image, Severus yelled 'Expecto Patronum!' A huge silver doe burst out of his wand and cantered the length of the classroom.

James and Sirius stopped laughing abruptly. Lily gazed, transfixed, at the doe. Then she turned and stared at Severus.

As he held her gaze, Severus knew that he had found his happy memory – the only memory that would ever work.

A/N: Prompt by Muse Amusant: If you have to concentrate on a really happy memory to conjure a Patronus, what memory does Snape choose?

The name Edmund means "happy protection" in Old English. I thought it was appropriate.